

Wabasha-Kellogg Public Schools Policy

650 SELECTION AND RE-EVALUATION OF RESOURCES

I. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The School Board of Wabasha-Kellogg Independent School District #811 supports the principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States as expressed in official statement of professional associations.

Copies of the following documents are appended and form a part of this policy:

The Library Bill of Rights
Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights
Statement on Intellectual Freedom
Freedom to Read
Freedom to View
Policy on the Freedom to Teach, to Learn and to Express Ideas in the Public Schools

- B. Each building administrator shall provide a copy of the Selection & Re-Evaluation of Resources to all new employees during new teacher orientation. Current staff will receive a copy of the policy in the year that major revisions are adopted by the School Board. The employees shall be reminded that the right to file a statement of concern about a resource is one granted by policies enacted by the School Board.
- C. For the purpose of this statement of policy, the term “resources” will refer to any person or any material, whether acquired or locally produced, with instructional content or function that is available or unavailable for formal or informal teaching or learning purposes. The term “unavailable” refers to a resource that has been denied inclusion in the educational system. Resources include, but are limited to textbooks, other books, supplementary reading & informational materials, charts, dioramas, filmstrips, kits, machine readable data files, maps, microforms, models, motion pictures, periodicals, pictures, realia, slides, sound recordings, transparencies & video recordings, plays, concerts, athletic events, written or performed music and computer software. All media generated electronically, internet, social sites, etc.

II. OBJECTIVES OF SELECTION

- A. It is the responsibility of school personnel to provide resources that will support and enrich the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, learning styles and maturity levels of students served.
- B. It is the responsibility of school personnel to provide resources that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, critical analysis of differing side of issues, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and recognition of various societal values.

- C. It is the responsibility of school personnel to place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of media that assure a comprehensive collection of resources appropriate for the complete education of all students.

Donated resources will be judged by the criteria outlined in Section IV, and will be accepted or rejected by those criteria.

- D. Selection is an ongoing process which includes the removal of resources which are no longer appropriate and replacement of resources which are lost or damaged. Materials which no longer meet the stated objective of selection outlined in Section II, will be discarded according to accepted professional practices as described in the American Library Association Publication, Evaluating & Weeding Collections, and the Crew Method.

III. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

- A. The School Board is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the School District. The School Board delegates the responsibility for the selection of resources to the administrators and professional staff employed by the School District.
- B. The responsibility for the selection and purchase of resources rests with the professional staff and administrators.

IV. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

- A. Resources shall support and be consistent with the general educational goals of Wabasha-Kellogg Ind. School District #811 and the goals and objective of individual schools and specific courses.
- B. Resources shall be chosen to support and enrich the individual school curriculum and to meet the personal needs of the students.
- C. Resources shall be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles and social development of students for whom the materials are selected.
- D. Resources shall provide a background of information which will motivate students to examine their own attitudes and behavior, to comprehend their duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges as participating citizens in our society, and to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
- E. Resources shall provide information on differing sides of issues so that users may develop the practice of critical analysis.
- F. Resources shall be selected for the atypical student as well as the average student.

- G. Resources shall be selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses and shall be judged as a whole.
- H. When community resource people, agencies and organizations are being considered for use, the School Principal will be consulted prior to selection.

V. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH A CONCERN ABOUT A RESOURCE

- A. Occasionally a statement of concern about resources will be made despite the care and procedure followed in their selection. School personnel should be prepared to explain the process used and appropriateness of the selection in regards to educational purposes.
- B. Any resident or employee of the School District may make a statement of concern about the inclusion or exclusion of resources in the School District's educational program on the basis of appropriateness.
- C. A statement of concern is defined as a written statement of opposition to a resource, requesting that it be excluded, included or restricted. The required "Statement of Concern" form is included in this policy.

VI. STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURE WHEN A STATEMENT OF CONCERN OCCURS

- A. Each concerned individual(s) shall be directed to the School Principal. If a verbal statement of concern has not been resolved, now the concerned individual(s) shall be required to complete and return a "Statement of Concern". The concerned individual shall complete one (1) Statement of Concern form for each resource about which there is concern.
- B. If the concerned individual(s) fails to return the Statement of Concern form within ten (10) school days, the objection shall be regarded as waived or withdrawn.
- C. Within three (3) regular school days of receiving the Statement of Concern, the School Principal shall contact the concerned individual(s), provide a copy of these policies and procedures, and arrange a meeting with the individual(s).
- D. The School Principal and/or other appropriate staff shall explain to the concerned individual(s) the school's selection procedure, the selection criteria and the qualifications of those persons selecting the resources.
- E. The School Principal and/or other appropriate staff shall explain the selection rationale for the resource, its intended educational use, and any additional information regarding its use.
- F. Upon receipt of the completed and signed Statement of Concern form, the School Principal shall, within five (5) regular school days, refer it to the School District's Resource Committee for re-evaluation of the resource.

- G. The Building Principal and the staff member directly involved shall be promptly informed of the completed Statement of Concern form.
- H. The Resource Committee shall:
 - 1. Be Notified of the Statement of Concern
 - 2. Read, view or listen to the questioned resource
 - 3. Meet to consider the questioned resource and make a decision
 - 4. Follow all procedures outlined in this policy.

VII. RESOURCE COMMITTEE

- A. The Superintendent will ensure that all positions of the Resource Committee are filled annually and consist of the following members:
 - 1. One member selected from the School Board
 - 2. Building Principals
 - 3. One Elementary Teacher selected by the Education Minnesota (Wabasha-Kellogg)
 - 4. One Secondary Teacher selected by the Education Minnesota (Wabasha-Kellogg)
 - 5. Prior to the first meeting, the five committee members shall select three residents of the Wabasha-Kellogg Ind. School District #811 to serve on this committee.
- D. One of the Building Principals will serve as chair. School board member is secretary.
- E. If any Resource Committee member is involved with a questioned resource, a temporary replacement from his/her category shall be appointed by the members of the Resource Committee until the matter involving member is resolved.

VIII. GUIDELINES FOR THE RESOURCE COMMITTEE

- A. Five (5) members of the Committee for Resource Committee shall constitute a quorum. A quorum is required at all meetings where a decision is to be made regarding a questioned resource.
- B. All committee members are voting members.
- C. The Chair shall
 - 1. Notify committee members of the Statement of Concern and set a meeting date.
 - 2. Distribute a copy of the completed Statement of Concern form to each committee member.
 - 3. Distribute the appropriate Checklist.

4. Obtain and arrange for reading/viewing/listening to the questioned resource.
5. Obtain reviews of the questioned resource and send them to each committee member at least three (3) regular school days prior to the Resource Committee meeting.
6. Within twenty (20) days of receiving the Statement of Concern, hold a Resource Committee meeting to discuss the questioned resource, hear testimony and reach a decision. If more time is necessary, the committee members and all others involved shall be notified.
7. Invite the concerned individual(s), teacher or administrator involved to the committee meeting.
8. Invite appropriate persons to provide testimony during the meeting.
9. Meeting is public.

D. The Resource Committee shall:

1. Examine the challenged resource thoroughly.
2. Determine professional acceptance of the resource by reading critical reviews.
3. Weigh values and faults and form opinions on the resource as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of context.
4. Discuss the resource in the context of the educational program.
5. Hear testimony.
6. Make a decision by public vote.
7. Prepare a written report

E. The Recording Secretary shall:

1. Record attendance.
2. Take notes and complete the report of the Resource Committee
3. Obtain signatures from committee members
4. Be responsible for filing all required reports within five (5) regular school days.
5. Send copies of the completed report to the concerned individuals, the School Principal, the Superintendent, and the teacher involved.

IX. RESOLUTION

- A. The written report, signed by all members of the Resource Committee who attended the meeting, accompanied by all materials used during the proceedings, and a minority report, if there is one, shall be filed with the Superintendent and with the Chairperson on the School Board at Wabasha-Kellogg Ind. School District #811. This shall be the official record of the case.
- B. In the case of a tie vote, the Statement of Concern will be dismissed.
- C. The decision shall be binding for the individual, school or as specified in the report by the Resource Committee.

- D. A decision to sustain a Statement of Concern shall not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professionals involved in the selection and/or use of the resource.
- E. The decision shall be communicated to all interested parties.
- F. The committee's decision may be appealed to the Wabasha-Kellogg Ind. School District's School Board. The School Board has the final decision on the re-evaluation.

STATEMENT OF CONCERN

Request for Re-Evaluation of Education Materials Wabasha-Kellogg Ind. School District #811

Please check location:

Elementary Junior High High School Other

Please check type of Material:

Book Textbook Video Computer Software
 Website Kit Periodical Other

Title: _____

Author: _____ Publisher: _____

Request Initiated by: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Representing: Self Organization or Group

The following questions are to be answered after the complainant has read, viewed or listened to the material in its entirety. If sufficient space is not provided, attach additional sheets. (Please sign your name to each additional attachment.)

1. To what resource do you object? Please be specific, cite pages, frames, etc.

2. What do you believe is the theme or purpose of this resource?

3. What do you feel might be the result of a student using this resource?

4. For what age group would you recommend this resource?

5. What are the positive features of this resource? Please comment.

6. Did you read/view/listen to all of the resource? If not, what parts?

7. What would you like your school to do about this resource?

- Do not assign to my child
- Withdraw from certain ages (specify ages) _____
- Have Resource Committee review the material
- Other (specify) _____

8. What other educational resource of the same subject and format would you recommend in its place?

Signature of Complainant

Date

**Please return completed form to the School Principal.
Checklist for Resource Committee: FICTION**

Author/Producer: _____ Title: _____

A. Purpose

1. What is the purpose, theme or message of the resource? How well does the author/producer/composer accomplish this purpose?

2. If the story is fantasy, is it the type that has imaginative appeal and is suitable for the user? _____ Yes _____ No
If no, for what age group do you recommend? _____
3. Will the reading and/or listening to the resource result in more compassionate understanding of human beings? _____ Yes _____ No
4. Does it offer an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the aspirations, achievements, and problems of various minority groups?
_____ Yes _____ No

B. Content

1. Does the story about modern times give a realistic picture of life as it is now? _____ Yes _____ No
2. Does the story avoid an over simplified view of life, one which leaves the reader with the general feeling that life is sweet and rosy or ugly and meaningless?
_____ Yes _____ No
3. When factual information is part of the story, is it presented accurately?
_____ Yes _____ No
4. Is prejudicial appeal readily identifiable by the potential reader/viewer/listener?
_____ Yes _____ No
5. Are concepts presented appropriate to the ability and maturity of the potential user?
_____ Yes _____ No
6. Do characters speak in a language true to the period and section of the country in which they live?
_____ Yes _____ No
7. Does the resource offend in some special way the sensibilities of women or a minority group by the way it presents either the chief character or any of the minor characters?
_____ Yes _____ No
8. Is there preoccupation with sex, violence, cruelty, brutality, and aberrant behavior that would make this resource inappropriate?
_____ Yes _____ No
9. Is there any use of offensive language, is it appropriate to the purpose of the text?
_____ Yes _____ No
10. Is the resource free from derisive names and epithets that would offend minority groups?
_____ Yes _____ No
11. Is the resource written well? _____ Yes _____ No
12. Does the story give a broader understanding of human behavior without stressing differences of class, race, color, sex, education, religion, or philosophy in any adverse way?
_____ Yes _____ No
13. Does the resource made a significant contribution to the history of literature or ideas?
_____ Yes _____ No
14. Are the illustrations appropriate and in good taste? _____ Yes _____ No
15. Are the illustrations realistic in relation to the story? _____ Yes _____ No

Additional Comments: _____

Please return completed form to the School Principal.
Checklist for Resource Committee: NON-FICTION

Author/Producer: _____ Title: _____

A. Purpose

1. What is the overall purpose of the resource?
2. Is the purpose accomplished? _____ Yes _____ No

B. Authenticity

1. Is the author competent and qualified in the field? _____ Yes _____ No
2. What is the reputation and significance of the author and publisher/producer in the field? _____
3. Is the resource up-to-date? _____ Yes _____ No
4. Are the information sources well documented? _____ Yes _____ No
5. Are the translations and retellings faithful to the original?
_____ Yes _____ No

C. Appropriateness

1. Does the resource promote the educational goals and objectives of the curriculum? _____ Yes _____ No
2. Is it appropriate to the level of instruction intended? _____ Yes _____ No
3. Are the illustrations appropriate to the subject and age level?
_____ Yes _____ No

D. Content

1. Is the content of this resource well presented by providing adequate scope, depth and continuity? _____ Yes _____ No
2. Does this resource present information not otherwise available?
_____ Yes _____ No
3. Does this resource give a new dimension or direction to its subject?
_____ Yes _____ No

E. Reviews

1. Source of Review _____
_____ Favorably Reviewed _____ Unfavorably Reviewed
2. Does this title appear in one or more reputable selection aids?
_____ Yes _____ No (If answer is "yes" please list titles of selection aids.)

Additional Comments: _____

Blank

Report of Resource Committee

Author/Producer: _____ Type of Resource: _____

Title: _____

This decision was made on the _____ day of _____, 201__.

Minority Report is attached.

Findings of:

Fact:

Decision:

The following committee members are in agreement with the above decision:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The following committee members are NOT in agreement with the above decision:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Blank

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forms for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

*Adopted June 18, 1948
Amended February 2, 1961- June 27, 1967 – January 23, 1980
By the ALA Council*

Access to Resources and Services In the School Library Media Program

An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The school library media program plays a unique role in promoting intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem solving skills needed in a pluralistic society. Although the educational level and program of the school necessarily shape the resources and services of a school library media program, the principles of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS apply equally to all libraries, including school library media programs.

School library media professionals assume a leadership role in promoting the principles of intellectual freedom within the school by providing resources and services that create and sustain an atmosphere of free inquiry. School library media professionals work closely with teachers to integrate instructional activities in classroom units designed to equip students to locate, evaluate, and use a broad range of ideas effectively. Through resources, programming, and educational processes, students and teachers experience the free and robust debate characteristic of a democratic society.

School library media professionals cooperate with other individuals in building collections of resources appropriate to the developmental and maturity levels of students. These collections provide resources which support the curriculum and are consistent with the philosophy, goals and objectives of the School District. Resources in school library media collections represent diverse points of view and current as well as historical issues.

While English is, by history and tradition, the customary language of the United States, the languages in use in any given community may vary. Schools serving communities in which other languages are used make efforts to accommodate the needs of students for whom English is a second language. To support these efforts, and to ensure equal access to resources and services, the school library media program provides resources which reflect the linguistic pluralism of the community.

Members of the school community involved in the collection development process employ educational criteria to select resources unfettered by their personal, political, social, or religious views. Students and educators served by the school library media program have access to resources and services free of constraints resulting from personal, partisan, or doctrinal disapproval. School library media professionals resist efforts by individuals to define which is appropriate for all students or teachers to read, view, or hear.

Major barriers between students and resources include: imposing age or grade level restrictions on the use of resources, limiting the use of interlibrary loan and access to electronic information, charging fees for information in specific formats,

requiring permission from parents or teachers, establishing restricted shelves or closed collections, and labeling. Policies, procedures, and rules related to the use of resources and services support free and open access to information.

The School Board adopts policies that guarantee students access to a broad range of ideas. These include policies on collection development and procedures for the review of resources about which concerns have been raised. Such policies, developed by persons in the school community, provide for a timely and fair hearing and assure that procedures are applied equitably to all expressions of concern. School library media professionals implement district policies and procedures in the school.

American Association of School Librarians

Adopted July 2, 1986

Amended January 10, 1990 by the ALA Council

Note: Persons writing policies should be sure that the statements from professional organizations included in the policy are the currently endorsed statements. For example, many selection policies still include the School Library Bill of Rights. The School Library Bill of Rights is no longer an endorsed American Association of School Librarians document. It was rescinded in 1976 and replaced in 1986 with this interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.

Statement on Intellectual Freedom

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States is a cornerstone of our liberty, supporting our rights and responsibilities regarding free speech both written and oral.

The Association for Educational Communications and Technology believes this same protection applies also to the use of sound and image in our society.

Therefore, we affirm that:

Freedom of inquiry and access to information – regardless of the format or view points of the presentation – are fundamental to the development of our society. These rights must not be denied or abridged because of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, or social or political views.

Children have the right to freedom of inquiry and access to information; responsibility for abridgement of that right is solely between an individual child and the parent(s) of that child.

The need for information and the interests, growth, and enlightenment of the user should govern the selection and development of educational media, not the age, sex, race, nationality, politics, or religious doctrine of the author, producer, or publisher.

Attempts to restrict or deprive a learner's access to information representing a variety of viewpoints must be resisted as a threat to learning in a free and democratic society. Recognizing that within a pluralistic society efforts to censor may exist, such challenges should be met calmly with proper respect for the beliefs of the challenger. Further, since attempts to censor sound and image material frequently arise out of misunderstanding of the rationale for using these formats, we shall attempt to help both user and censor to recognize the purpose and dynamics of communication in modern times regardless of the format.

The Association for Educational Communications and Technology is ready to cooperate with other personal or groups committed to resisting censorship or abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas and information.

Association for Educational Communications Technology

Freedom To Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label “controversial” books, to distribute lists of “objectionable” books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising critical judgment will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be “protected” against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio, and television. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural in a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissent idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

And yet, suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United State the elasticity to endure stain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of

expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new ideas and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towards conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression of which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We, therefore, affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe, but why we believe it.

2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

A book should be judged as a book. No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish which draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern literature is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which will suit the demands of one group without limited the freedom of others.

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.

The idea of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is not freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when expended on the trivial; it is frustrated when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all citizens the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of books. We do so because we believe that they are good, possess of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read

is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May, 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953

*Revised January 28, 1972 – January 16, 1991
By the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee*

Freedom to View

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest possible access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film video, and other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To consent vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

American Film and Video Association
Adopted 1979
Updated and approved, 1989

Legal References:

Cross References: